

APPROVED
Cedar Area Fire & Rescue Board
Regular Meeting
Thursday, January 6, 2022 at 7:00 pm
Cedar Fire Department

Call to Order

Chairman Greg Julian called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m with the Pledge of Allegiance. Present on roll call were Greg Julian, Rick Royston, John DePuy, Ron Schaub and Chris Comeaux. Andy Doornbos and Dana Boomer were present as staff.

Discussions/decisions will be for the direction of the Cedar Area Fire & Rescue Board as previously published, per the Open Meetings Act. Potential quorums of township boards will be noted in the minutes.

Citizens Comments – None

Consideration of Agenda – The board briefly discussed the agenda. **Motion by Royston to approve the agenda as presented, second by Schaub. All in favor, motion carried.**

Minutes: Approval of December 16, 2021 General Meeting Minutes – The board briefly discussed. **Motion by DePuy to approve the December 16, 2021 General Meeting Minutes as presented, second by Comeaux. All in favor, motion carried.**

Correspondence Received – None

Financials –

Boomer had previously provided a handout to the board which detailed the financial statements for December. The beginning cash balance in the operating fund as of December 1 was \$175,865.49 and the ending cash balance as of December 31 was \$119,866.55. Income for the month was \$14,754.65. The vendors' payables were \$22,499.29. The December payrolls were \$25,260.21 on 12/8 and \$22,974.09 on 12/21.

The board briefly discussed the vendors payable and payroll. The updated unpaid bills detailed list was presented, and briefly discussed.

Royston moved to accept the December vendors payable as presented, Comeaux seconded. All in favor, motion carried.

Royston moved to accept the December payrolls as presented, Schaub seconded. All in favor, motion carried.

Royston moved to accept the December financial statements as presented, Schaub seconded. All in favor, motion carried.

Presentation – Discussion with Lynn Harvey regarding Act 57 – The Fire Board discussed the potential for the creation of a Fire and EMS Authority under Act 57. Harvey stated that the main reason for a Fire and EMS Authority would be to allow an independent governing unit. An Authority could be a taxing authority, or could have each township responsible for paying their share however they would like, similar to the current structure of the department. Harvey recommends the second method, as it avoids conflict over how each township's funding is raised. There are several methods for determining the various shares for each township. If the four townships remain in agreement that a 25% split per township is fair, that is a very easy way to continue. However, if one township ends up using a much larger share of the resources, an even split may not be fair.

Harvey and the board discussed other issues related to the creation of an Authority, including board membership. Harvey stated that the current agreement is fairly solid. The only place where he sees it could stand to be improved are the sections dealing with the ownership of buildings, ability to take on debt, and ability to levy taxes, or whether these were able to be done. Harvey and the board discussed capital costs and how these costs and the resulting ownership could be dealt with under an Authority. Doornbos asked Harvey whether he thought the current agreement or a Fire Authority would be more likely to result in a long-term entity. Harvey stated that the Fire Authority tends to be a more legacy or long-term entity, as it is a legal entity, versus the current interlocal agreement, which works as long as everyone is getting along when the agreement comes up for renewal.

Harvey stated that an Authority is generally formed to address an issue or problem that has been found in an existing entity. An Authority should not be formed just to form an Authority. In many cases, he sees that township boards are unwilling to give up additional authority to the fire board or an Authority.

After finishing the discussion with Harvey, the Fire Board discussed the potential for an Authority. The Fire Board is interested in seeing an Authority formed, due to the likelihood for it to be a longer-lasting entity. The biggest point of discussion is likely to be the ownership and maintenance of the existing building and new buildings, especially given that the necessary repairs to the existing building will likely be extensive and expensive, and it will still be an old building.

Unfinished Business:

- a. HSA Policy - Boomer presented an updated HSA contribution policy with minor changes from the policy approved last month (see attached). The board briefly discussed. **Schaub moved, Royston seconded to approve the 1/6/2022 HSA contribution policy. All in favor, motion carried.**

- b. Floor/Drain Work – Comeaux stated that he spoke to another concrete company who said that the quote from Spence Brothers was too high. Doornbos previously tried to find other companies to bid and couldn't – he will speak with the company that Comeaux spoke with to see if they are interested in bidding. This item will be taken off future agendas and included in the chief's report for now.
- c. Strategic Planning – Doornbos is still waiting on additional responses for the community and staff surveys. He is beginning to work on some of the other work for the strategic planning process in the process of working on the annual report. Doornbos has also spoken with Alpine Electric, asking them to do a walk-around regarding replacing the lighting with more energy-efficient lighting. Alpine has worked closely with Consumers Energy on other projects in order to get rebates.
- d. 2022 Special Meeting with Township Officials – The board discussed a need for a special meeting with township officials to discuss the issues that have been found with the existing building, the need for a new building, and the possible options going forward for the improvement of infrastructure. Copies of the bound station evaluation report were distributed to the township representatives for distribution to the township boards at their meetings next week. The fire board had a consensus that they would like to see all infrastructure owned by the fire department and all capital repairs or improvements on this and future stations borne by all four townships. However, this may require a restructuring of the fire department, per the discussion with Lynn Harvey on Act 57 Authorities. The board had a consensus that they would like to see an authority formed, for the betterment of the services provided by Cedar Area Fire & Rescue.

DePuy moved that the Fire Board recommends that a Fire & EMS Authority be formed for Cedar Area Fire & Rescue. Comeaux seconded. All in favor, motion carried.

The board then discussed how to move forward with the presentation of the station evaluation (this will be done at the township meetings next week), and how to move forward with the discussion on forming an Authority. Royston would like to see Julian meet with the other three supervisors to discuss the issue of an Authority. After discussion, it was determined that Julian would work to set a meeting with the three other supervisors, one additional fire board member, and the fire chief. This will hopefully be completed before the February fire board meeting.

- e. Interlocal Agreement Review Process – No further discussion.

New Business:

- a. Any New Business – None

Reports:

- a. Fire Chief – The Chief's Report was provided in the meeting packet. Doornbos summarized the main points of his report. The chief and board discussed the report.

Doornbos asked for the ability to move money from another line item to pay for approximately \$7000 of wildland gear prior to the wildland fire season. DePuy suggested asking the National Park Service for funding; if that does not work the board had a consensus to allow the movement of money for funding of wildland gear.

- b. Department Staff – Staff has finalize updating the retirement plan agreement to allow non-union members to participate; the final agreement is ready to be signed by Julian tonight.
- c. Chairman – None

Citizens Comments – Doornbos stated that a call was taken that was originally reported as food poisoning. The issue was instead found to be carbon monoxide poisoning affecting two family members and the family dog, which was a great catch by on-duty firefighters Voiles and Pucelik.

Board Member & Chair Comments – Julian asked for the March meeting to be re-scheduled to the first Monday, March 7. The board had consensus for it to be rescheduled.

Next Meeting Date – The next regular board meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 3, 2022 at 7 pm.

With no further business, Royston moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:33 pm, Schaub seconded. All in favor, motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Dana Boomer
Recording Secretary

CEDAR AREA FIRE & RESCUE

HSA CONTRIBUTION POLICY

1. CAFR will make contributions to full-time employees' Health Savings Accounts (HSAs) to fulfill the contractual obligation that such employees not bear more than \$500 of their insurance deductible on an annual basis through the chosen health insurance plan.
2. The contributions will be made in the following fashion:
 1. Each year in the first payroll after January 1, the department will contribute \$1,000 into each full-time employees' HSA.
 2. In order to receive the remainder of the department's annual obligation, employees must show insurance deductible costs that total more than \$1,500 (the original \$1,000 contribution plus the employee's \$500 obligation). Additional payments will be made with the next payroll after receipts are received by the department bookkeeper.
 3. If an employee anticipates a large medical expense, they may communicate this in writing to the department chief and bookkeeper. The department may provide an advance on HSA contributions, at the discretion of the department chief.
 4. The department will not make contributions in excess of the insurance deductible minus \$500 for any individual employee.

1/6/2022